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# GREEN HILL



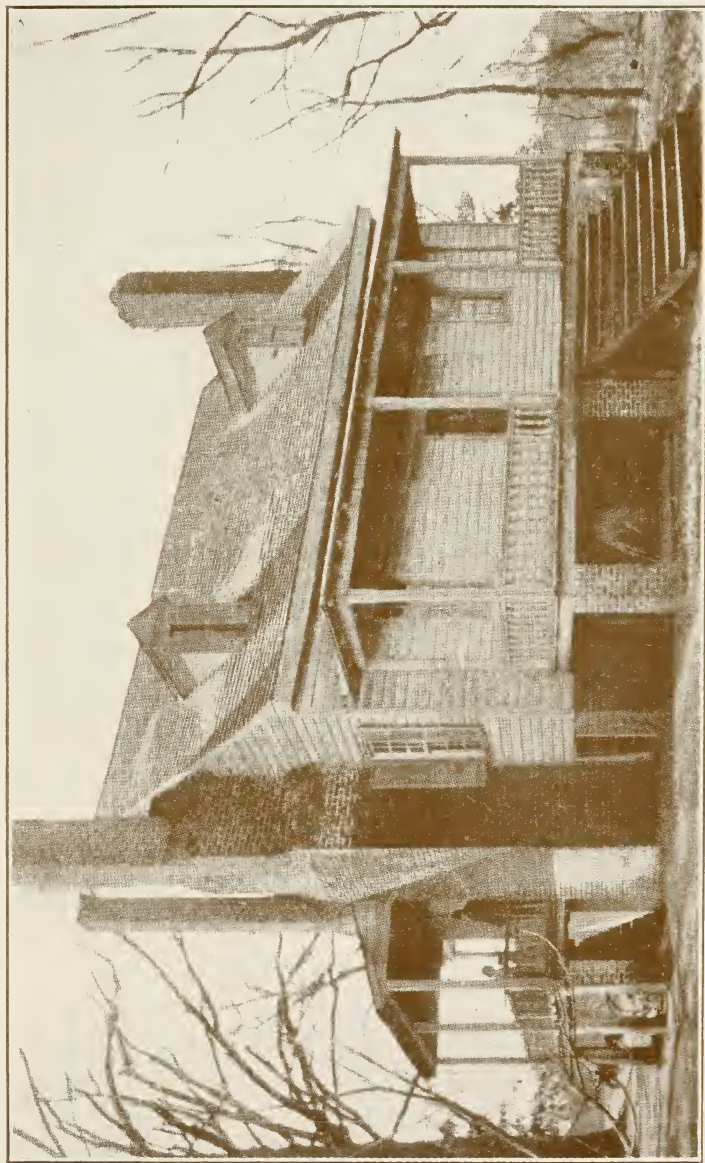


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"GREEN HILL"

Once the Home of Green Hill, "Preacher, Patriot, Pioneer," Where was held the First Annual  
Conference of the Methodist Church in America Near Louisburg, N. C.



# *GREEN HILL*

*by*

THOMAS NEAL IVEY

*Edited with Genealogical Notes by*

J. EDWARD ALLEN  
WARRENTON, N. C.

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## *Prefatory Note*

The undersigned has pleasure in presenting to the reader the contents of this booklet, for reasons which will be self-evident. It is no exaggeration to say that there are thousands of people who are interested in the matters of family history which are included, and which have not hitherto been found in print except in fragments. With the passage of years, the facts pertaining thereto will inevitably become more obscure, and this progressive age of North Carolina is no suitable time in which to permit to remain concealed, the priceless heritage of the past.

Dr. Thomas Neal Ivey was one of the South's foremost men of letters, and the paper by him which is included in the contents of this booklet is an important contribution to the literature of this state and of the entire South. As editor of the *Raleigh Christian Advocate*, and later of the organ of the General Conference, the *Nashville Christian Advocate*. Doctor Ivey had deserved opportunity to demonstrate well and widely his literary powers, and his General Conference is the gainer thereby.

At its 1926 sessions, the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, resolved that a committee be appointed to take steps looking toward the acquisition by the Conference of GREEN HILL, once the residence of the pioneer minister-patriot from whom it takes its name, to the end that it may be used for all purposes to which it may lend itself, and that it may be retained as a monument to the man and to his ideals. The execution of the provisions of this resolution, which was introduced by President William Preston Few, of Duke University, anticipates perhaps more general information concerning Green Hill than exists at the

present time. It is not believed that the people of our great commonwealth will suffer from being better informed concerning this member of that group of outstanding men who may well be called the founders of Southern Methodism and of North Carolina statehood.

Bute County, and Franklin and Warren, which were formed from it, have made an enviable contribution to the statesmanship of North Carolina. It is hoped that other names may be selected for study by other historians.

The writer's happy recollections of childhood days as a guest of his grandparents at Green Hill, and later at Louisburg College; and his fondness for his grandmother, Mrs. Louisa Hill Davis (Mrs. Matthew S. Davis), who will, it is hoped, read it with pleasure, have in large measure inspired the publication of this booklet.

J. EDWARD ALLEN.



MRS. LOUISE HILL DAVIS, (1836-——)  
(Mrs. Matthew S. Davis): The Oldest Living Graduate of  
Louisburg College, (Class of 1853); Widow of One  
of Its Presidents and Mother of Another.





## *Introductory and Genealogical Notes*

Green Hill, the second, the subject of Doctor Ivey's sketch, was the son of the elder Green Hill, the earliest member of the Hill family of whom there is available to the writer of this introduction, any authentic information. It is with much supporting evidence believed that his father was Robert Hill of Halifax county. The first Green Hill was a prominent citizen of the state, public-spirited and influential. Grace Bennett, wife of the elder Green Hill, was the daughter of "William Bennett, Gentleman," of Northampton county, North Carolina. A deed to land given him by the Earl of Granville, one of the Lords Proprietors, so describes him. He was Captain of the Roanoke Company of 101 men, Northampton Regiment, Colonial Militia, in 1748. (Colonial Records, XXII, 273.)

The records of Blandford Bute Lodge of Masons, which were rediscovered in 1914, show that this lodge was in existence as early as 1766, having its meetings in old Bute county, from which Warren and Franklin were formed in 1779. The first lodge hall was a few miles from old Jones' Springs, a famous watering place, near which Anne Carter Lee, daughter of Gen. Robert E. Lee, was buried, and from which neighborhood her remains were never removed. The lodge afterward was moved to Warrenton, and became Johnston-Caswell, No. 10, of which this present writer is a member. These records show that Green Hill, Henry Hill and William Hill, were members of the lodge. These lodges were, during the Revolutionary period, really Committees of Deliberation on the State of the Country, and, therefore, the minutes cease for the period of the war. The members for the most part came from the vicinity of Petersburg, Va., whence the name of "Blandford-Bute." Many names on its rolls are identical with those of the charter list of the parent organization in Petersburg, Blandford, No. 3, chartered in 1757. The section north of Raleigh and east of Roxboro, North Carolina, was very largely settled by people who came south from eastern Virginia. Abigail Sugan, hereinafter mentioned, is said to have been the first woman in the armies going southward, to cross the Roanoke River.

When the first Colonial Assembly of North Carolina, described as the first popular Convention of any Colony in America, was held in New Bern on August 25, 1774, Green Hill was among the delegates present. It is declared that no such Convention had ever preceded this in America, except by royal authority or approval. It met in defiance of the Crown and its royal Governor and his proclamations, there being seventy members present, representing almost all of the thirty-five counties.

Chief Justice Clark, editor of the North Carolina Colonial Records, said of this Convention that it "never had a superior from that day to this, and doubtless never will in all time to come. Scarcely a name prominent in the annals of the day is wanting."

The second Provincial Congress was held at Hillsboro, on August 25, 1775, and Green Hill was again present.

Green Hill, the elder, had four sons and four daughters. Facts are available from a number of sources, among these being two Hill Bibles. One of these was formerly owned by Mrs. Mary Foy, or Ivy, of St. Louis; the other is now owned by Mr. Hill Ferguson, of Birmingham, Alabama. The four sons were Henry, born in 1740; Green, born in 1741, Bennett, born in 1745, William, born in 1750. The daughters were Mary, born in 1754, Sarah, born in 1756, Temperance, born in 1761, and Elizabeth, born in 1763. All of these married and had large families, their descendants being found in practically every Southern state today.

The writer's own family is descended from the fourth son, William Hill, who married Mary (or Polly) Jones, daughter of Sugan Jones, and granddaughter of Edward Jones and wife, Abigail Sugan Jones—this latter the famous progenitor of a large number of substantial citizens of the North Carolina of the present day. William and Mary Jones Hill were married in 1776, and to them were born four sons: William Bennett, born in 1779, Samuel Sugan, born in 1781, James Jones, born in 1782, and Charles Appplewhite, born in 1784.

Charles Appplewhite Hill, the next in the present writer's line, was a distinguished and successful educator, the author of a *Latin Grammar*, a copy of which is now in the possession of Mrs. Louisa Hill Davis, the writer's grandmother. There are other prominent descendants of William Hill: the late Senator Augustus Hill Garland of Arkansas, Attorney General in Cleveland's Cabinet, and often described as the strongest member thereof, was one. The name of Charles Appplewhite Hill is attached to the bill providing funds for the first public schools in North Carolina.

He married in 1806, Rebecca Wesley Long, daughter of Gabriel Long and granddaughter of Col. Nicholas Long, who was one of the most prominent men of his time; a member of the same Provincial Congress in 1774 and again in 1775; Quartermaster General in the Continental Army; member of the Committee of Safety of Halifax county; Commissioner of Confiscated Property; made Colonel by the Congress in 1775; member of the North Carolina State Senate in 1784. To Charles A. and Rebecca Wesley Long were born William George, Mary Ann, Daniel Shine, Kemp Plummer, Nicholas Long, Richard Henry, Martha Caroline, Sarah R., and Charles J. Hill, whose names are given in order of age.

The third of these, Daniel Shine Hill, born in 1812, was married in 1835 to Susan Irwin Toole, who was granddaughter of the Rev. John King, M.D., who was educated in England for the ministry of the Established Church, and afterward became a Methodist

and came to Baltimore, Maryland, where a monument was recently erected to his memory. Doctor King studied at Oxford University. He was disowned by his family when he came under Wesley's influence. He preached "through the heroic days of Methodism;" to use the words of a writer describing him in the *William and Mary Quarterly*; and is elsewhere described as "the father of Methodism in North Carolina."

Susan Toole Hill was also the granddaughter of Geraldus Toole, who "owned fourteen thousand acres of land in Edgecombe county," (the "Conetoe Plantation"), according to Joseph Lacy Seawell, and whose ancestry is traced directly to old Ireland's nobility.

Her grandmother on her father's side was a sister of Col. Henry Irwin, who was killed at the battle of Germantown. Susan Toole Hill inherited considerable property from her father.

The eldest daughter of Daniel Shine Hill was Sarah Louisa Hill, who was born in 1836, was married in 1857 to Matthew S. Davis, of Louisburg, and who is now living in Warrenton, N. C., as this is written. Another of the children of Daniel S. Hill was Dr. Charles Geraldus Hill, who became a resident of Baltimore, Maryland, and there was until his death in 1925 one of its most prominent physicians. Others were Mrs. Walter Starke, now living; Mrs. Madeline Best, Mrs. Pauline Brooks, who was the wife of Dr. John R. Brooks, of the Methodist ministry, Mrs. Florence Jones; Susan Irwin, who died young; Daniel Sehon; William; and Mrs. Carrie Painter, now living.

Many of the present generation still remember Matthew S. Davis, who was for years a teacher of boys in the Louisburg Academy, and later in 1896, became president of Louisburg College, which position he held until his death in 1906. The writer remembers the time when he, as a boy, visited his grandfather, Matthew S. Davis, at old "Green Hill," near Louisburg. There were, and are, high mantels in the house. There are still scars on his knuckles, occasioned by falling in the fire while hunting on one of these mantels for something eagerly sought by a boy. When Matthew S. Davis moved his household goods to Louisburg College to become its president, the writer rode on one of the wagons filled with furniture. The horses on a return journey became frightened, ran away, and threw this writer out into a thicket of blackberry briars. The title to "Green Hill" has never been held by any other than a member of the same family.

Matthew S. Davis and his brothers were grandsons of Burwell Davis, the elder, who was a soldier in Sharp's Company, Tenth North Carolina Continental Regiment, in the War of the Revolution. Robert Edward Davis, Sheriff of Warren county, and William Edward Davis, of Creek, N. C., also now living, are grandsons of this soldier of the Revolution.

The children of Matthew S. Davis and Louisa Hill Davis are: Florence Davis, now Mrs. Eugene S. Allen; Mary, now Mrs. Ivey

and after some years joined her husband, Secretary-Treasurer of the Masonic Orphanage at Oxford, N. C., as senior teacher in its high school; Lula, who married Robert Zollicoffer Egerton and resides in Louisburg, N. C.; Mabel Irwin, Librarian of the Memorial Library at Warrenton; Marion Stuart Davis, architect, residing at Louisburg; and the Rev. Edward Hill Davis, of the North Carolina Conference. Charles died in young manhood.

Mrs. Louisa Hill Davis takes no little pride in the fact that she is an unregenerate daughter of the Southern Confederacy. Its traditions, and the scenes of the War between the States, are still fresh and live vividly in her mind. The "Yankee" army camped in the grove for a season, in front of her door: and may not easily be forgotten. She is the oldest living graduate of Louisburg College.

Eugene S. Allen is the son of the late Nat Allen, at one time Superintendent of Public Instruction of Warren county. The family is descended from Capt. Charles Allen, who saw distinguished service in the War of the American Revolution, and who was the son of Richard Allen, of Brunswick county, Virginia, whose father came to that state about 1720 from England. A copy of the coat of arms of the family is in the possession of the writer. The Rev. J. T. Gibbs, D. D., of the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal church, is a descendant of Capt. Charles Allen. Nat Allen himself was on Gen. Robert W. Ransom's staff in the War between the States, four of his brothers also having been in the armies of the Southern Confederacy. His nephew, George Garland Allen, son of the late Peter H. Allen, is at the head of the Duke Endowment, the most notable philanthropy that North Carolina has ever seen.

The children of Eugene S. Allen and Florence D. Allen are: John Edward, the present writer; Mary Louise, and Charles Pryor. The eldest of these, the writer, introduces himself as a school man, superintendent of schools in his native city and county; and his brother and sister as engaged in mercantile business with their father.

In conclusion the writer makes mention of the fact that in 1921 there became his wife Sue Council Broom, daughter of the Rev. Robert Houston Broom, of the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, native of Union county, and his wife, Sue Council, native of Bladen county, a lineal descendant of Col. Alexander McAllister, of Revolutionary fame, from whom hundreds of successful people in this and other states trace their descent. Children of J. Edward and Sue Broom Allen are Isabel McAllister and Frances Jean Allen.

## GREEN HILL

*Preacher, Patriot, Pioneer*

By THOMAS NEAL IVEY

*Read before the Historical Society of the Western North  
Carolina Conference, October 19, 1920*

It can be safely stated that there are comparatively few who can locate chronologically the subject of this paper or mention any fact that would naturally project him as a distinct historical character. He figures only modestly in the annals of his State and Church. No standard history gives him more than passing mention. Then why introduce him to a Historical Society as the legitimate subject of an historical paper? Simply because he was a maker of history. Every history-maker is a ward, if not a child, of history, possessing a valid claim to that publicity which represents more a method of ethical torch-bearing than a method of sensational advertising.

There should be a clear conception of what is meant by history. Mr. Emerson in his elaborate essay on "History" is entitled to attention when he says: "Broader and deeper we must write our annals—from an ethical reformation, from an influence of the ever new, ever sanative conscience—if we would trulier express our central, wide relative nature instead of this old chronology of selfishness and pride to which we have too long lent our ears." The essence of the meaning of these words is that apart from the history of the old chronology and the pride of spectacular events and of haloed personalities, is a truer, juster, higher history of ethical reformations springing from impulses born amid individual strivings and of mighty, if not advertised, exploits inspired by that "sanative conscience" which ignores mere chronologies and despises the chaplet-leaf of fame.



To this latter kind of history belongs the subject of this paper. We cannot study his life with its high idealism, its keen pioneering energies, and its sound constructive service to Church and country without realizing that he justifies his claim to the attention of the higher history and answers signally to that definition of a "great man" given by Mr. Emerson in another essay: "I count him great who inhabits a higher sphere of thought into which other men rise with difficulty and labor." Because of the chronic and seemingly incurable misconception of the meaning of real history and of real greatness we find in Green Hill one of history's almost "forgotten men." The mission of this paper is to bring him out, if possible, into the light of a broader recognition and a more appreciative memory; for to remember truly such a man is to keep flowing a fountain which for more than a century has been pouring its waters into the mighty current of our national life.

#### IN THE LIGHT OF THE MORNING

Green Hill, the son of Green and Grace Bennett Hill, was born in Bute County, North Carolina, November 3, 1741. There are no records which throw any light on his immediate forbears. It is highly presumable that they moved to North Carolina in the latter part of the seventeenth century with that band of English settlers who located around Albemarle Sound and later on the banks of the Roanoke. That the Hills of that early day were members of the Established Church may be taken for granted. There is an old entry to the effect that Green Hill, undoubtedly the father of our subject, was appointed vestryman of the Parish of St. George in 1758.

It is to be regretted that we know so little of the boyhood and youth of Green Hill. It must be apparent to all that there is a decided disadvantage for one who essays to draw the picture and appraise the life of a man who is not seen in the morning light of boyhood and youth. That morning light is needed to harmonize perspectives, equalize values, and explain many things that appear so plain at noonday or in the mellow light of

evening. Imagination, however, using the knowledge of conditions that obtained in the Carolina Province in 1741, can make the best of it. In those days every inviting avenue, it seems now, was closed to the boy. The country was a tangled wilderness. The settlers were widely scattered. There was not a regular school house in the whole colony. There was no post office. There was no newspaper. There were only a few churches scattered over a vast territory. The Sunday School had not been established. Steam and electricity were unknown. There was not a public road. Yet it would be a mistake to assume that boyhood in that day was only a stretch of strenuous, cheerless existence, and that Green Hill as a boy did not find all that was necessary to fill to the brim the cup of eager, bounding, inquisitive life.

#### IN THE PATHWAY OF TWO EPOCHAL MOVEMENTS

During these early days two epochal movements, whose respective culminations were destined to change the history not only of America but of the whole world, were rapidly gathering force. They had been born long years before Green Hill was born. They were to envelop him and either make him or leave him a mere human fragment in their wake. One of these movements was toward civil freedom. The other was toward that broad ecclesiastical freedom which promotes the highest spiritual liberty for the individual and the State. The one culminated in the American Republic; the other in American Episcopal Methodism.

Both movements, as has been stated, enveloped Green Hill at a critical time in the life of the movements and in the life of the man himself. We see the credentials of his eminent forcefulness in his active relationship to these movements. He rose to the full heights of the situation. He showed a loyalty so true, a devotion so exalted, and a service so self-sacrificing and constructive as to make it impossible for us now to dig beneath our Republic and our Methodism without finding him among the foundation stones of the imposing superstructures.

In studying his claim to remembrance on the part of the nation and of Methodism we must view him in his relations to these movements, and to another movement to be considered later on in this paper.

#### EPISCOPAL METHODISM IN AMERICA

The resistless urge toward the goal representing the establishment of Episcopal Methodism in America really began that evening in Aldergate Street in 1739, when John Wesley felt his heart "strengely warmed," and at last rejoiced in the long-sought consciousness of spiritual freedom. That "strange warmth" and the thrill of a new-found liberty in Christ Jesus established the Methodist Societies in England in 1740. It had much to do with the repeated visits to America of George Whitefield who went as a flame of evangelical fire up and down the Atlantic Seaboard. It sent Philip Embury to New York in 1760. In the heart of Robert Strawbridge it operated to build the first Methodist Church in America in 1768. It built St. John's Church in New York in 1768. It brought Francis Asbury across the sea in 1771. It sent Robert Williams to Virginia in 1772.

The religious condition in North Carolina when it was first touched by the breath of Methodism was not encouraging. There were few churches. There were not more than several dozen Established churches and chapels in the whole province. Only clergymen of the Established Church were allowed to perform the rites of matrimony. The Baptists were preaching at several points. There were fewer than twenty congregations of Presbyterians. Several Lutheran and German Reformed churches were being established in the western part of the State. The Moravians had settled what is now known as Forsyth County in 1753. The Moravians had been preaching in the Province for nearly a hundred years. To obtain a clear idea of the spiritual destitution of the province in the latter decade of the eighteenth century we have only to read the diaries of Francis Asbury and others. Some of the entries appear amusing to us, but at that time the facts were far from amusing.



The condition was so alarming during the administration of Governor Gabriel Johnson that he deemed it necessary to read to the House a special message on the subject.

Green Hill was more than thirty years old when he found himself caught in the swirl of the invincible Methodist movement. We do not know exactly when it was. It may have been when Joseph Pilmoor, the first Methodist preacher to set foot on North Carolina soil, came down from Virginia and set the whole section blazing with revival fire. Or it may have been a little later under the preaching of Robert Williams, who organized the first Methodist Society in North Carolina, or during that wonderful revival which started under the preaching of Robert Williams in Virginia in 1772 and swept across the border into Bute County, in which Green Hill lived. It was probably under John King's influence. But one day he felt the Methodist tide washing around his feet as he listened to preaching which caused him to make the great renunciation and the great surrender. He was not content to bask in the new liberty into which the Holy Spirit had brought him. He entered the new life as a leader. Shortly after his conversion he began as a local preacher to establish the new faith in his community. It was through the preaching of Pilmoor and Williams and of such local preachers as Green Hill and others that the North Carolina Circuit to which Poythress, Dromgoole, and Tatum were appointed in 1775, had 683 members. He had helped to lay the mudsills of Episcopal Methodism and was striving with all his soul to build his very life into the structure. He was the first native son of North Carolina, so far as is known, to become a Methodist preacher.

#### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC

Let us now leave Green Hill as a leader in that movement which was later to culminate in the establishment of American Episcopal Methodism, and see him as a leader in that other movement which culminated in the establishment of the American Republic.

The history of the American colonies is the history of conflict—not so much with Indians, the wilderness, and the rigors of soil and climate, as that waged by the spirit of freedom which forced Magna Charta from King John on June 15, 1215, and then set out to show everywhere and at all times a mailed hand against tyranny. The story of North Carolina, therefore, is a story of the victories and defeats of this spirit of liberty. It was very active during the Proprietary Period, 1663 to 1729. It was manifest in active opposition to the payment of export duties, the exactions of the Established Church, and other forms of royal tyrannies exercised through mercenary proprietors. There was a bloody clash during the administration of Governor Tryon in 1768 on the field of Alamance. The iniquity of the Stamp Act was firing the animosities of the people. The conflict assumed a very serious form in 1774 during the administration of Governor Martin when, on August 25, in spite of the opposition of the governor, the first Provincial Assembly met at New Bern to elect delegates to a Continental Congress at Philadelphia, which congress assumed to exercise powers vested in the people, and to acknowledge no duty whatever to the Crown.

#### YIELDING TO THE CALL OF PATRIOTISM

The first Provincial Assembly in North Carolina was made up of delegates elected by the people. According to Wheeler in his History of North Carolina, "it was not a conflict of arms or force, but it was the first act of that great drama in which battles and blood formed only subordinate parts. It was the first assembly of the people of North Carolina in a representative character in opposition to the Royal Queen." It is not strange to find as a delegate to this great meeting our local Methodist preacher, Green Hill. He and William Person were delegates from Bute County, which will ever be known in North Carolina as the county in which there were "no tories." It would have been as difficult for Green Hill to refrain from participating in this conflict as from becoming a local preacher of Methodism after

the great light had broken into his soul. That constructive element in his nature with the strong ethical impulse made him a forceful leader in the ranks of those who established the American Republic and in the ranks of the white bannered host that established American Methodism.

The second Provincial Congress met at New Bern on April 3, 1775. It was called by the moderator of the First Provincial Congress. The House of Assembly which had been elected by order of Governor Martin met at the same time and place. The members of one body were the members of the other. There is record of Green Hill's having been a member of this Second Provincial Congress. The Third Provincial Congress met at Hillsboro on the 20th of August, the same year. At this Congress momentous action was taken, severing relationship with the Crown. A kind of provincial government was established, an army was placed in the field, and provision was made for the issue of necessary currency. Green Hill was a member of this Third Provincial Congress. He was appointed to serve on one of the most important committees—that of Privileges and Elections. It is an interesting fact to be remembered that at least three members were ministers of the Gospel, Green Hill of the Methodist Societies, from Bute, Rev. William Hill of the Baptist Church, from Surry, and Rev. Henry Patillo, of the Presbyterian Church.

Green Hill was a member of the Fourth Provincial Congress which met in April, 1776, at Halifax, as was also his brother-in-law, Benjamin Seawell. The crowning work of this Congress was to affirm the province's absolute independence of the mother country. Thus North Carolina led all the colonies in affirming this independence. At this Congress Green Hill received a military title—that of Major of the Militia. He was known later in life as "Colonel Hill," but if he received any other title than that of Major I have not been able to find the record. He was placed on a committee to regulate the militia. Cornelius Harnett, Samuel Ashe and William Hooper were his follow-committeemen. He was also

designated as one of the signers of the bills of credit issued by Congress. The highest testimony to his influence and ability was his appointment on a committee to prepare a civil constitution. The committee failed to agree on a constitution, but appointed a sub-committee to propose a temporary form of government pending the next session of the Assembly. The Council of Safety was appointed, and the Council recommended that on the 15th of the following October delegates should be elected to meet on November 12, to form a constitution. This latter assembly had Richard Caswell for its President. On December 17, a day ever to be remembered in North Carolina, a bill of rights was adopted. On December 18 a constitution was adopted, with Caswell as Governor, and North Carolina became entirely independent of the British Government.

Green Hill was not a delegate to the famous Assembly, though no man in the State had done more to make it possible. We find him, however, an active member of the Assembly of 1777. He represented Franklin County in the Assembly of 1779. Bute County was no more. From it had been formed Franklin and Warren Counties. In this Assembly of 1779 he presented a bill for making better provision for the poor, and so far as records show he was the pioneer in the movement to establish public institutions for the indigent in the Old North State.

In 1781 Green Hill enlisted as Chaplain of the 10th regiment, Sharp's Company, and saw service the same year as far west as Salisbury, when our armies were on a retreat.

On November 30, 1782, the treaty of Paris was signed and American independence was a fact forevermore. It would seem that the time had come for Green Hill to retire to his large landed estate on the Tar near Louisburg, the county seat of Franklin, and leave others to assume the burden of public duties. He had taken a strenuous and prominent part in establishing the independence of his State and the country. But the idea of retirement had not entered his mind. It was unsuited

to his temperament. He was only a little over forty years old. He was too useful a man to cease his functions as a burden bearer. In 1783 he was elected Treasurer for the District of Halifax. There were several districts and as many treasurers. All State officials were under the governor. He was also elected one of the Councillors of State, which position he continued to hold until some time in 1786, as is shown in a letter written him by Governor Caswell. There is no doubt that as treasurer of Halifax County he had some trouble with the Assembly. A shortage was charged. We are not surprised, though, to find that in the Assembly of 1789 the Committee appointed to report on the shortage of Green Hill as Treasurer of Halifax District reported favorably and that he was entitled to 233 pounds, thirteen shillings, and sixpence, which amount was directed to be paid to Mr. Hill. This was a double vindication. In his case there had been no shortage, but a reimbursement was declared necessary.

#### THE FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF ORGANIZED EPISCOPAL METHODISM

At the beginning of 1785 there were fewer than eighteen thousand Methodists in America. There were hardly one hundred preachers. Coke had been sent by John Wesley across the Atlantic. The famous Christmas Conference of 1784 had been held and Episcopal Methodism, altogether independent of the Established Church, had become an organized force. The time had come for the holding of the first Annual Conference of organized Episcopal Methodism. The place had been selected. There was no directory showing the homes of the preachers. There was no need of any directory. There was only one home for all the preachers, and that was the home of Green Hill. It was one of those plain, story-and-a-half houses so common at that day. Yet then it was considered a mansion. It was built of massive timbers, having five rooms in the basement, four on the second floor and two in the attic. It still stands in a remarkable state of preservation. Through one



door you look southward. Through the opposite door you see, across the Tar about one mile distant, the beautiful town of Louisburg. Close at hand is an old fashioned garden. On the right is a clump of cedars guarding the resting place of the dead, among whom is Edwin Fuller, North Carolina's gifted poet, and a descendant of the owner of the house.

The upper story of the house now contains two rooms. Originally there was but one room. In this one upper room the First Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America was held on April 20, 1785. Bishops Asbury and Coke presided. This Annual Conference embraced a territory covering Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina. Twenty preachers were present. There was John King, the Oxford scholar and skilled physician, who was disinherited by his parents when he became a local preacher, and who crossed the ocean and preached the first Methodist sermon in Baltimore. There was Jesse Lee, one of the doughtiest knights that ever went forth in the crusade of Methodism. There was Philip Bruce, the boldest of the "Thundering Legion." There was Reuben Ellis, one of the choicest spirits among the first Carolina preachers. It is very probable that the following also were present: Edward Dromgoole, Francis Poythress, John Easter, John Dickins, John Tunnell, Hope Hull, and James O'Kelley.

It was a fraternal meeting. There were no vexing questions. Only the normal work of the new Church was considered. Bishop Coke most unwisely injected the slavery question. The injection was unwise not primarily because he was the guest of a man who had many slaves, but because the question was in extreme form for that day and those circumstances. Fortunately he did not push his radical views. The gain during the year was gratifying. There had been 991 members received. The work was extended into Georgia. Philip Bruce was made Presiding Elder. For the first time the term and the office came into use.

While in the house of Green Hill were held three other Annual Conferences—in January, 1790, December, 1791, and December, 1794—it is probable that in each case the members of the respective Conferences were entertained in the neighborhood. By this time the population of the community had grown. Bishop Asbury in his Journal says under date of January 19, 1792: "I rode with no small difficulty to Green Hill's, about two hundred miles, the roads being covered with snow and ice. Our Conference began and ended in great peace and harmony. We had thirty-one preachers stationed at the different houses in the neighborhood."

It can thus be seen what a gracious host this great Methodist was. His hospitality, as will be seen, was extended to a Methodist Conference in another State. We must be careful to make the chief fact in Green Hill's life not that he entertained so graciously the first Annual Conference of Episcopal Methodism in America, but that he acted so self-sacrificingly and heroically in making the Methodism whose first Conference he entertained.

#### THE PIONEER

Green Hill was destined to take an active part in another great movement which played a most important part in the development of this country. This was the pioneer movement, which, toward the latter part of the eighteenth century, crossed the Alleghanies and helped to build up the great State of Tennessee and other States of the Mississippi Valley. The frontier has ever been the goal of civilization's advancing columns. Emerson Hough has said: 'Always it has been the frontier which has allured many of our boldest souls. And always just back of the frontier, advancing, receding, crossing it this way and that, succeeding and failing, hoping and despairing—but steadily advancing in the net result—has come that portion of the population which is not content with a blanket for a bed and the sky for a roof above. The frontier has been the lasting and ineradicable influence for the good of the United States. It was there we showed our fighting edge, our unconquerable

resolution, our undying faith. There, for a time at least, we were Americans. We had our frontier. We shall do ill indeed if we forget and abandon its strong lessons, its great hopes, its splendid human dreams." Green Hill had been resting for a life-time under the lure of these frontiers, which represented the establishment of a great Church and a mighty Republic. It is not strange that he yielded to the lure of that other frontier which lay toward the setting sun and hid the valley in which the battle of human progress is to be fought and in which our Republic shall see the fairest fruitage of its wonderful energies.

In 1796 he crossed the Alleghanies and made a trip to that fairest picture of our Continent—the section which is now called Mid-Tennessee, and into which at that time the waves of a pioneering population were washing. As he went he preached. It is both refreshing and inspiring to read in his diary his eventful itinerary, and especially to see that as he went he preached—not in the church houses, for there were few of them, but in the majestic groves and the extemporized shanties of the settlers.

In 1799 Green Hill moved his family to Tennessee and settled about twelve miles south of Nashville. There among those beautiful rolling hills he built a residence which he called Liberty Hill. It was hardly so pretentious as his other residence, Liberty Hall, in North Carolina, but it was considered one of the best homes in the section of the Alleghanies. It was a home for the Methodist preachers from Bishop to Circuit rider. Here in this peaceful home Green Hill lived as the affluent planter and the active local preacher. He had been ordained deacon by Bishop Asbury on January 21, 1792. He was ordained elder by Bishop McKendree on October 4, 1813.

#### MCKENDREE'S FIRST CONFERENCE

It was at Liberty Hill that Bishop McKendree held his first Conference in 1808. This was the Western Conference, which included the States of Tennessee,



Kentucky, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and all territory west of the Mississippi River.

Bishop Paine, in "Life and Times of McKendree," says: "The conference at Liberty Hill was held at a camp meeting [the grounds were at the foot of the hill on whose crest stands the residence], the preachers lodging on the encampment while the Bishops, in view of Bishop Asbury's feeble health, stayed at the residence of Col. [Maj.] Green Hill. As there was but one conference at that time in the West, the traveling preachers collected here from Holston, Natchez, Opelousas, Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee, covering a vast field of labor—an immense theater for missionary enterprise. To supply this extensive and extending field of itinerant occupations, some fifty-five preachers had been employed the preceeding year. Many of these had been toiling in the frontier settlements and had come hundreds of miles to Conference, fatigued with travel, enfeebled by affliction, exposure and labor; bare of clothing; in money matters almost penniless—really itinerant, houseless wanderers—but they brought cheering intelligence of religious revivals, and growing spiritual prosperity. Bishop Asbury says in his Journal: 'We have had 2500 increase; there are seven districts, and a call for eighty preachers.' "

#### A CLOSER LOOK

Only the salient facts in the life of Green Hill have been given. Let us now view him at somewhat closer range. At the beginning of the nineteenth century he is comfortably settled in Tennessee. He is far past life's meridian. We see him growing old gracefully and usefully, having behind him a constructive record which has lifted him far above the average in the roll of public characters. He had given distinguished service to his State as patriot and legislator, and had the satisfaction of seeing that State free and independent. He had thrown his whole soul into the spread of scriptural holiness according to the Methodist faith. He had not only

seen Methodism established as a strong and growing Church, but had the pleasure and honor of entertaining its first Annual Conference. He had become pioneer and had established himself in a new territory in which his pioneering spirit found its accustomed exercise.

Green Hill was married twice. Both wives were wealthy and represented the best blood in the State. So he enjoyed not only acquired wealth but inherited wealth. He was a large slave holder. He was married in early life to Nancy Thomas, on October 13, 1763. The children of this marriage were: Jordan Hill, who resided in North Carolina until his death and left a large family of children; Hannah Hill, who was married to Thomas Stokes of Chatham County, N. C.; Nancy Hill, who married Thomas Knibb Wynn of N. C., and died in 1791, leaving a number of descendants, among whom were those worthy Methodist laymen, the Southgates of Durham, N. C.; Martha Hill, who was married to Jesse Brown of N. C., and moved to Tennessee and was long a resident of Lebanon; Richard Hill, who died in infancy. Nancy Thomas Hill died on January 16, 1772. On June 3, 1773, Green Hill was married to Mary Seawell, daughter of Hon. Benjamin Seawell of old Bute County, N. C. The children of this marriage were Green Hill, III, who died in Alabama, leaving a large family of children; Lucy Hill, who married Rev. Joshua Cannon. (They moved to Tennessee and settled in Williamson County, leaving a number of descendants), John Hill, who after having gone to Tennessee and married, settled in Rutherford County, in that State, leaving a number of descendants; Thomas Hill, who, having married, also settled in Rutherford County, and died at an extremely old age, leaving a number of descendants; Sally Hicks Hill, who was never married and died in Williamson County, Tenn.; Mary Seawell Hill, who was married in Tennessee to Adam de Graffenreid, and died, leaving only one child, who was never married; William Hill, who married and settled in Rutherford County, Tenn., and died in Haywood County, leaving one son, Richard Hill, who afterwards became a Methodist

preacher; Joshua Hill, who moved with his father to Tennessee and afterward married Lemiza Lanier of Beaufort County, N. C. He was a local preacher in the Tennessee Conference, but died young in 1827, leaving a son, John L. Hill, who was for years a member of the Tennessee Conference. The daughter of Joshua C. Hill married Rev. William Burr of Tennessee Conference. A descendant is Mrs. Laura Burr Ferguson, widow of the late Gen. F. D. Ferguson of Birmingham, Ala. In Mrs. Ferguson's possession is the original Bible of Green Hill, and to her and her son, Mr. Hill Ferguson, I am indebted for much interesting data.

Green Hill and Dr. John King, the English scholar, preacher and physician, who took a prominent part in the establishment of Episcopal Methodism, married sisters—members of the Seawell family. Mrs. Louisa Hill Davis, widow of the late M. S. Davis, president of Louisburg Female College, and whose son, Rev. E. H. Davis, is a most useful preacher of the North Carolina Conference, is a collateral descendant of Green Hill on the father's side, and a lineal descendant of John King on the mother's side. Much space could be given to the names of those who are worthy descendants of Green Hill. They are many and are found in almost every Southern State. These men and women have enriched almost every walk of life. Some became preachers. One was a gifted poet, Edwin Fuller, author of "Angel in the Cloud." Quite a number became jurists and statesmen. Jordan Stokes, Sr., one of the ablest lawyers of Nashville, Tenn., is a lineal descendant of Green Hill. Senator Garland of Arkansas, who was a member of President Cleveland's cabinet, was a great-grand-son. Hon. Robert M. Furman, one of North Carolina's greatest editors, was a lineal descendant of our Green Hill. The list might be greatly extended and it would take in men and women who, while not so prominent as some who have been mentioned, are just as worthy representatives of the great and good man whose life is being sketched.

## HIS PERSONALITY

Green Hill has been described as a man of dignified bearing and polished manners. With his large wealth and impressive character he did not fail to exert a strong influence among his fellow men. His home was almost ideal in that early day. He never failed to be the earnest local preacher, intensely interested in the welfare and growth of the beloved Methodism in whose establishment he had taken such a practical and earnest part. He was a ready and fluent speaker and was fond of preaching the fundamentals of the Christian faith—free grace, free will, and individual responsibility. Rev. G. W. Sneed, writing of him in the *Lady's Companion* of August, 1849, said: "His talents as a minister of the Gospel, as I remember, were of a solid and useful character—not so much of a philosophical or metaphysical cast, but of a plain, experimental and practical kind addressing themselves to the understanding and feelings of all classes, enforcing moral obligation and duty with power upon the conscience. He understood and highly prized our doctrines and usages, and was sufficiently versed in polemical divinity to successfully combat the errors of infidelity and deism, and completely to refute false doctrine."

Bishop Paine had this to say of Green Hill: "The writer knew him well and spent the first night of his itinerant life at his house in 1817, and can never forget the Godly counsel and fatherly treatment he received from this venerable man during the first years of his ministry. And as his early life had been distinguished by integrity, patriotism and piety, so his old age was venerable and useful. There is a moral beauty and sublimity in the gradual decline of a truly good and noble old man, who, passing away full of years, ripe in wisdom and rich in grace, descends serenely and triumphantly into the grave amidst the regrets and veneration of society."

Green Hill died September 11, 1826, at his home at Liberty Hill. Far away from Old Bute County among

whose gently rolling hills he first saw the light, he sleeps only a few hundred yards away from the house which he built among the beautiful hills of Mid-Tennessee. Near his dust in the rock-walled enclosure is the dust of wife, sons, daughters, and grand children. As I stood by his grave in the light of a golden October afternoon not long ago, forgotten were the weather stains of a century on the headstone, forgotten was the old house swiftly passing into decay, forgotten were the first signs of decay in the hectic flush of autumn on the forest that billowed to the east. I thought only of life—the life of the Republic which Green Hill had helped to establish; the life of the great Church into which he had poured his very life-blood; the life of thousands who are feeling his influence to-day, and of thousands who will feel it in the years which are to come; the life of that simple Christian faith which had kept true and strong in peace and in war, in youth and in old age. I seemed to see a beautiful picture of Life—glorious Life—shining above that old headstone with its moss obscured lettering, and as I reverently gazed upon it, I repeated to myself a part of the inscription found on the headstone of one commemorated in the monument-filled cathedral—the 11th chapter of the Book of Hebrews: “And he being dead yet speaketh.” His memory is a great Church’s golden heritage. He needs no monument of marble or bronze. He still walks his rounds of service wherever Methodism lights her altar fires, whether it be at home or in the far-off lands into which she is throwing her picket lines. Her appreciation of such a man should find expression in a memory which preserves and perpetuates the high ideals of righteous civil government and of the kingdom of our Conquering Christ. Happy would it be if the two dwellings, one in North Carolina and the other in Tennessee, whose doors were ever open to the homeless Methodist preachers, could be kept through the years as a concrete symbol of Methodism’s undying interest in the Methodist itinerant.













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